



Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILES

Introduction

The information presented here is from a larger study of three user groups: commercial fishers, dive operators and environmental group members on their knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of management strategies and regulations in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS). The study profiles these user groups and provides information on user group knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of FKNMS management strategies and regulations in the baseline 1995-96 period and how things have changed over a 10-year time period. Some new baselines are also established on new management strategies and regulations.

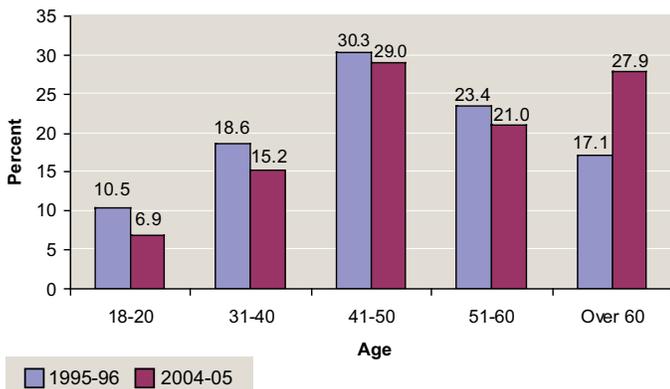
This fact sheet provides comparative socioeconomic profiles of commercial fishers over a 10-year period and includes information on number of Saltwater Product License (SPL) holders, age, experience, race/ethnicity, income dependency on fishing, group affiliations and affiliations with fish houses.

Socioeconomic Profile of Commercial Fishers

Number of Commercial Fishers. In 1995-96, there were 2,430 Saltwater Product License (SPL) holders in Monroe County/Florida Keys. By 2004-05, this number declined to 1,138 or a 53% decline. As a comparison, the number of SPLs in the State of Florida declined 38% over the same period. Fishery management regulations due to overfishing and excess capacity (economic overfishing), increased land values and competition with the tourist industry for waterfront access, and higher operating costs have all combined to reduce the number of commercial fishers in Monroe County/Florida Keys.

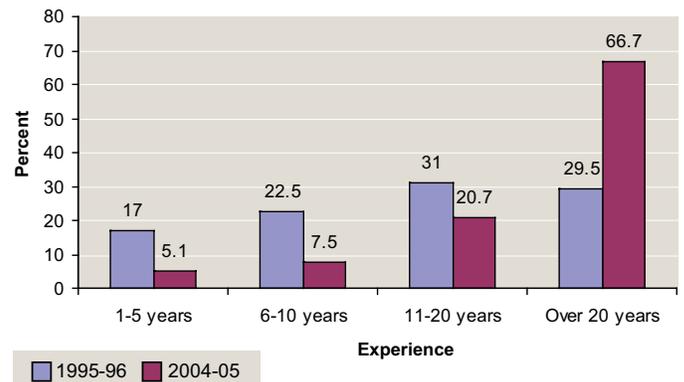
In addition to the reduction in the overall number of commercial fishers, there were also significant changes in the age and tenure of the commercial fishers. The remaining fishery is more professionalized with older, more experienced fishers, fewer part-time fishermen, more highly capitalized (more boats, equipment and gear—primarily traps), more dependent on fishing for their personal income and more affiliation with group organizations to represent their interests. Commercial fishers were also less dependent on affiliations with fish houses.

AGE. Over the 10-year period, commercial fishers were older with a much higher concentration of fishers over 60 years of age and fewer new recruits into the fisheries.



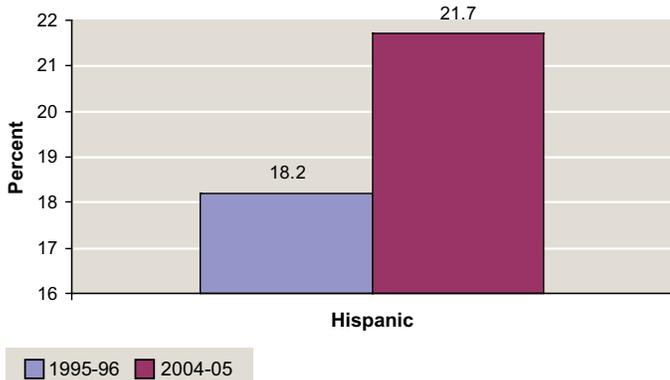
Age: In 1995-96, 10.5% of commercial fishers were 18-30 years old versus 6.9% in 2005-05; and, in 1995-96 17.1% of commercial fishers were over 60 years old compared with 27.9% in 2004-05.

EXPERIENCE. Over the 10-year period, commercial fishers remaining in the fishery are more experienced with a significantly higher proportion of fishers with over 20 years of experience and few new recruits.



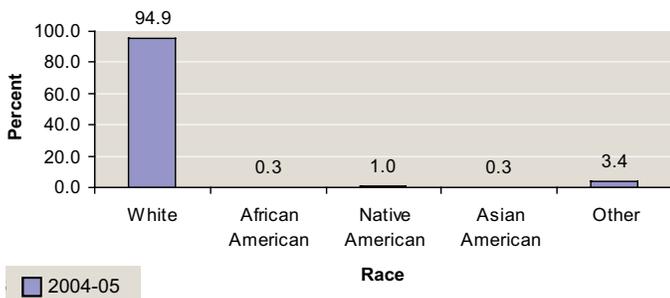
Experience: In 1995-96, 17% of commercial fishers had 1-5 years of experience, while this dropped to 5.1% in 2004-05. Commercial fishers with over 20 years of experience increased from 29.5% in 1995-06 to 66.7% in 2004-05.

ETHNICITY. Over the 10-year period, a higher proportion of commercial fishers stated their ethnic background was Hispanic or Latino.



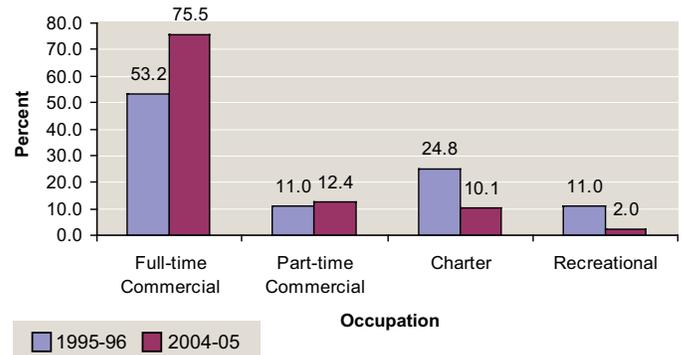
Ethnicity. In 1995-96 18.2% of commercial fishers stated they considered themselves of Hispanic or Latino origin compared to 21.7% in 2004-05.

RACE. In 2004-05, almost 95% of all commercial fishers were white.



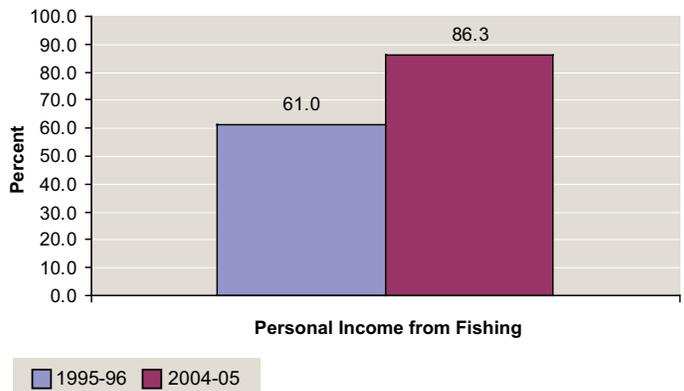
Race. In 2004-05, 94.9% of all commercial fishers were classified as "White", with 1% classified as "Native Americans", 0.3% classified as "Asian Americans", 0.3% classified as "African Americans" and 3.4% classified themselves as "Other".

OCCUPATION. Over the 10-year period a significantly higher proportion of commercial fishers became full-time commercial fishermen.



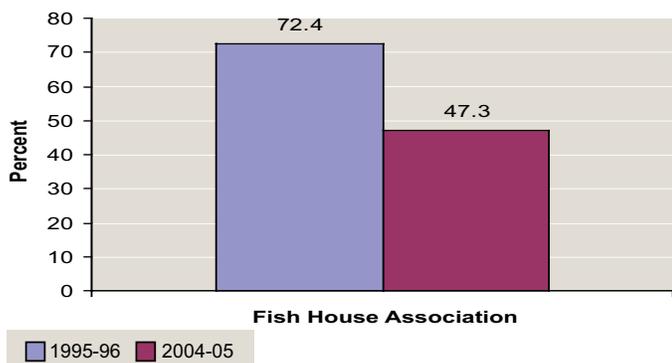
Occupation. Not only did the number of SPL holders decline, as noted above, the percentage of full-time commercial fishers increased significantly over the 10-year period from 53.2% in 1995-96 to 75.5% in 2004-05. Most of the change came from SPL holders that were classified as Charter or Recreational, who had SPLs so they could sell some of their catch. In the baseline, Charter and Recreational accounted for over 35% of all SPL holders, while in the 10-year replication this declined to about 12%. Those who were classified as pure commercial fishers, but part-time actually increased slightly from 11% to 12.4%. But overall the percentage of those who spent part-time in the commercial fishery declined significantly. These facts also support the conclusion of a smaller more professionalized group of commercial fishers.

INCOME DEPENDENCY. Over the 10-year period commercial fishers became significantly more dependent on the commercial fisheries for their total personal income.



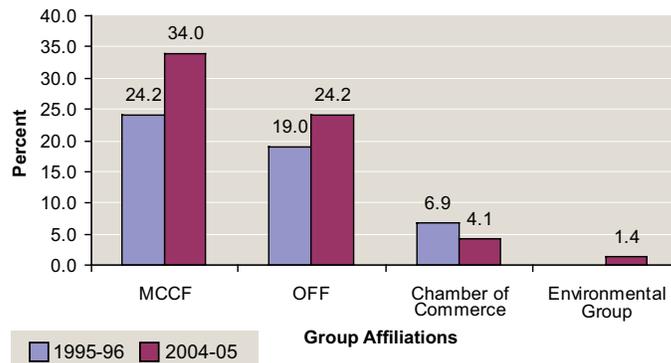
Income Dependency on Fishing: Commercial fishers were 25% more dependent on commercial fishing for their total personal income over the 10-year period. In 1995-96, commercial fishers received 61% of their total personal income from commercial fishing. By 2004-05, commercial fishers received 86% of their total personal income from fishing.

FISH HOUSE ASSOCIATION. Over the 10-year period there was a significant decline in associations with fish houses.



Fish House Association. In 1995-96, over 72% of commercial fishers belonged to a fish house compared to 47% in 2004-05. Much of the decline is due to the closing of many fish houses due to competition for waterfront access.

GROUP AFFILIATIONS. Over the 10-year period, commercial fishers significantly increased their affiliation with professional organizations that represent commercial fishing interests.



Group Affiliations: In 1995-96, 24% of commercial fishers were members of the Monroe County Commercial Fishermen (MCCF), in 2004-05 this increased to 34%. In addition, membership in the Organized Fishermen of Florida (OFF) increased from 19% to over 24% over the 10-year period. The MCCF is now the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association (FKCFA).

Access to Full Report

The full report can be cited as follows:

Shivlani, M., Leeworthy V.R., Murray, T.J., Suman, D.O., and Tonioli, F. 2008. Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions of Management Strategies and Regulations of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuaries by Commercial Fishers, Dive Operators, and Environmental Group Members: A Baseline Characterization and 10-year Comparison. Marine Sanctuaries Conservation Series ONMS-08-06. U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Silver Spring, MD. 170pp.

Available at: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/conservation/pdfs/kap2.pdf>

Full Report and Executive Summary are also available in portable document format (pdf) from:

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